

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 10 and 11 have been placed into independent form, in accordance with the suggestion of the Examiner. Claims 7-9 also have been placed into independent form by adding the limitations from claims 6 and 11, which form the basis for the Examiner finding allowability of claim 11 when placed into independent form. Claims 2 and 5 are rewritten to depend from claims 10 and 11, respectively. Claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 have been cancelled.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rieder (5,769,718) in view of Stephens et al (6,155,923). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

To the extent that claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 are cancelled, the rejection is moot.

With respect to claims 2 and 5, they now depend from allowable claims.

Finally, with respect to claims 7-9, they have been amended to incorporate the limitations from claims 6 and 11, which have been found to be a basis of patentability for claim 11.

Moreover, the Examiner has admitted that Rieder fails in teaching key limitations in claims 7-9, namely “displaying” images of player characters and non-player characters and background images that display scenes, and “restricting the switching of the background images from the start until the completion of an operational mode.”

Even though the Examiner asserts that the limitation of restricting the switching of the background images from the start until the completion of the operational mode is taught by Stephens et al, the reference is deficient with respect to the limitations of claims 6 and 11 combined.

Moreover, in Stephens et al, there is no mechanical operation or waiting time for access to memory, as previously argued. Stephens et al does not have any possibility of a problem that may create a waiting time. Thus, Applicants submitted that there is no motivation to even consider a need to reduce waiting time in Stephens et al.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)
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Further, the preamble of the claims state that switching of background images requires a finite and unacceptable delay. Applicant asserted that this phrase covers both mechanical and electronic access to storage for retrieval of background scene data. The invention as now stated is expressly limited to reducing such unacceptable delay, thus providing an advantage over the prior art. The Examiner asserts that this does not present a definite rate. However, a rate is not needed in this case as it reflects the application of a principle to current processor and display technology. The principle would apply even as processing speeds increase. The point is that the process speeds up the display to the player. However, even if this limitation is not acknowledged by the Examiner, the limitations in claims 6 and 11 clearly provide a patentable advance over the art, and should be a basis of patentability.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

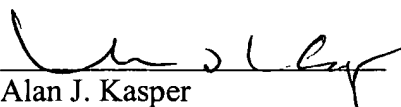
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